

Canada's Fraser River

Reasons for sockeye salmon declines with a comparison to Bristol

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Introduction

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Recently, Fraser River sockeye populations have been impacted by proponents of mining projects in Bristol Bay, who cite 'Fraser River of Excellence' between mining and fisheries (Joling 2011). Due to and biological nature, as well as levels of urbanization and industrialization, the two systems make an unlikely comparison. However, the Fraser River system with impaired water quality, human development, changes and prey bases, and climate change in the lowest productivity of sockeye in over fifty years.

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Fraser River sockeye salmon populations are suffering from myriad with urban and industrial development, leading to dramatic decreases in multiple fisheries closures, and federal and international population list there are stressors from contamination (from mining, wood product facilities), introduced predators, and increased riverine and marine environment, stressors are related to household and industrial of habitat, and warmer marine water temperatures.

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While the blame for the declines simply cannot be pointed in current state of Fraser River sockeye is unfortunately another disaster of human development and salmon.

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Status of Fraser River salmon

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The Fraser River is known as one of the greatest salmon rivers in Canada's largest salmon producer (Burgner 1990). Commercial sockeye

are the most commercially valuable species in the Fraser, and generate millions of dollars annually until the mid-1990s. In recent decades, however, total runs of sockeye, productivity (recruit per spawner), and commercial wide fluctuations, and ultimately significant declines (Pacific Salmon Commission 2011). Productivity is currently low, indicating populations are barely replacing themselves (Figure 1, Peterman et al. 2010). Low return closures in the last 6 of 11 years, including three consecutive years when total runs failed to exceed two million fish (Figure 1, Peterman et al. 2010).

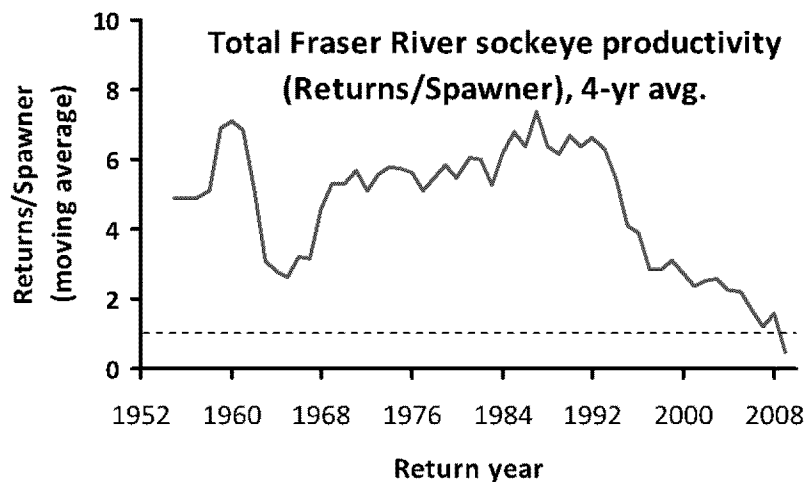
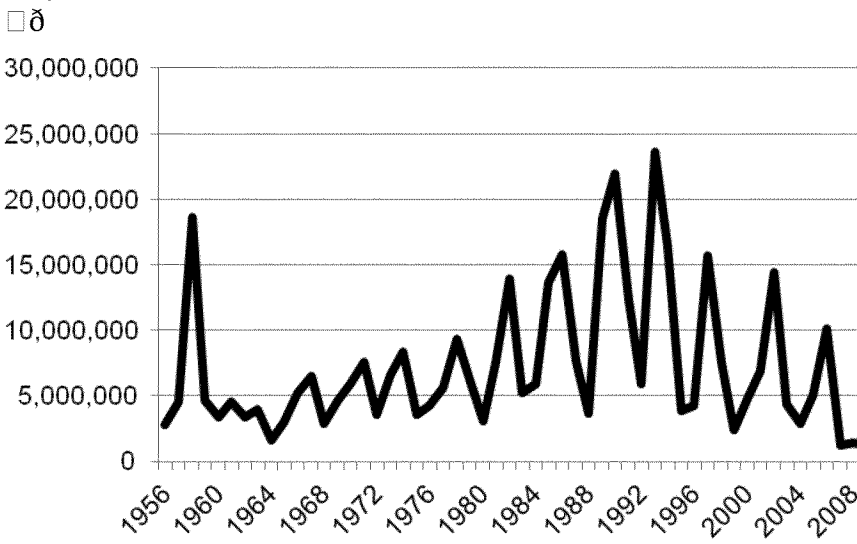


Figure 1. Total Fraser River sockeye returns (top) and productivity (bottom) from 1952 to 2008. The horizontal line indicates the productivity at which the population can replace itself, i.e., the replacement level. Data from Peterman et al. 2010.

During the most recent assessment, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) categorized 5 of 11 Fraser River sockeye threatened: one as Critically Endangered, three as Endangered, and

(Rand 2008). Cultus Lake sockeye the Fraser are designated by the Canadian government Committee on the Status of Endangered (COSWEIC; DFO 2011).

Prodigious research into causes of the declines includes an ongoing federal judicial inquiry. To date, results suggest salmon and their from a multitude of stressors. The following discussion summarizes reviewed and gray literature on the Fraser River sockeye declines, brief comparison of the Fraser River with the world's largest sockeye system, the Bristol Bay watershed in southwest Alaska. This discussion results emerge from the Cohen Commission federal inquiry, currently

Fraser River watershed environment

Contaminants

MacDonald et al. (2011) systematically evaluated over 200 aquatic of Fraser River basin in addition to potential exposure and harm to study indicates contaminated water and sediment, as well as accumulated contaminants in fish tissue, could pose hazards to spawning, rearing Primary elements of concern were pH, total suspended solids (TSS), (nitrate, nitrite, ammonia) major ions (chloride, fluoride, and sulphate), (aluminum, arsenic, boron, cadmium, chromium, cobalt, copper, iron, lead, selenium, and silver), and phenols. Concentrations of 6,3,7,8 equivalents occurred in salmon eggs at concentrations that may adversely reproduction. Data were insufficient to thoroughly examine impacts of disrupting chemicals such as pharmaceuticals, personal care products, insecticides, herbicides, and organometallic compounds, and biogenic compounds (2008), though authors concluded they undoubtedly were entering the likely have impacts on sockeye development and reproduction. For occurrence of feminized sockeye salmon (MacDonald et al. 2011) is exposure to endocrine disrupters.

Sources of contamination are numerous. Twenty eight major mines placer mines, 10 pulp and paper mills, 10 sawmills, wood product facilities, 15 wood preservation facilities, 17 cement and concrete facilities, processing facilities, 37 municipal wastewater treatment plants, 37 salmon facilities (Appendix 1), 83 municipal and industrial manufacturing facilities, as well as the oil and gas industry operate within (2011). Many of the aforementioned facilities are permitted to discharge concern (MacDonald et al. 2011) and for instance, 51 spills from various facilities during the period in 2007 (MacDonald et al. 2011) 2866 sites listed in Canada's Contaminated Sites Registry nearly 15 were located in the Fraser watershed (MacDonald et al. 2011). The contaminated sites is currently estimated to exceed 5,000 (MacDonald

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Human □ activities □ also □ contribute □ to □ the □ Fraser □ River. management □ activities, agricultural □ operations, □ and □ stormwater □ runoff □ can □ contain sediment, □ fertilizers, □ insecticides, □ fire □ retardants, □ and □ other □ contaminants □ (Nelitz □ et □ al. □ 2011). □ MacDonald □ et □ al. □ (2011) □ indicate □ suspended □ solids, □ nutrients, □ metals, □ phenols, □ and □ total □ hydrocarbons □ have □ the □ Fraser □ River □ pollution □ sources. □ Finally □ atmospheric □ sources □ of □ persistent □ organic □ pollutants □ and □ mercury, □ which □ can □ also □ impact □ aquatic □ life □ (Nelitz □ et □ al. □ 2005), □ include □ forest □ fires, □ volcanoes, □ and □ carbon □ emissions □

□

Land Use □

□

Nelitz □ et □ al. □ (2011) □ additionally □ examined □ impacts □ of □ mining, □ forestry, □ hydroelectricity, □ urbanization, □ and □ water □ use □ on □ the □ Fraser □ River □ sockeye □ salmon □ populations. □ potential □ impacts □ on □ Fraser □ River □ sockeye □ salmon □ populations. □

□

Mining □

Several □ types □ of □ mining □ take □ place □ in □ the □ Fraser □ Basin □ (Figure □ 2). □ mining, □ industrial □ mineral □ production, □ metal □ mining, □ oil □ and □ coal □ gas □ production. □ At □ least □ one □ operating □ mine, □ Gibraltar, □ produces □ acid □ mine □ water □ with □ high □ levels □ of □ dissolved □ copper □ and □ other □ metals, □ exceeding □

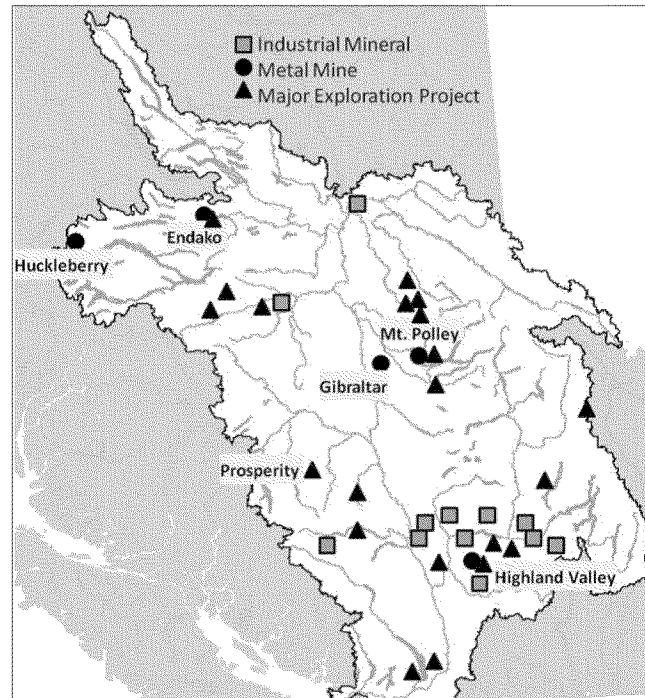


Figure □ 2. □ Distribution □ of □ the □ large □ mines □ in □ the □ Fraser □ River □ Basin □ (Nelitz □ et □ al. □ 2011)

□

effluent □ discharge □ criteria □ by □ several □ orders □ of □ magnitude □ (Brand □ Ferguson □ 1987). □ Placer □ mining □ is □ the □ dominant □ mining □ activity □ in □ the □ basin □ and □ may □ have □ the □ most □ significant □ impact □ on □ salmon □ due □ to □ sedimentation □ effects □ (Nelitz □ et □ al. □ 2011). □

□ □ □ □

Hydroelectric □

Two □ large □ hydroelectric □ projects □ within □ the □ basin □ the □ Bridge/Seton □ River □ power □ project □ and □ Alcan's □ Kemano □ Project □ on □ the □ Nechako □ River □ that □ affect □ water □ temperature □ and □ flow, □ at □ times □ inhibit □ the □ migration □ ability □ of □ sockeye □ salmon □ (Nelitz □ et □ al. □ 2001). □ Small □ hydropower □ projects, □ which □ can □ affect □ Total □ Gas □ Pressure □ (usually □ nitrogen □ supersaturation), □ gravel □ supply, □ and □ water □ temperature, □ also □ exist □ in □ the □ basin □ though □ in □ fairly □ low □ numbers □ (about □ 10 □ projects □) □ (Nelitz □ et □ al. □ 2011).

Urbanization ☐☐

Water ☐☐ demand ☐☐ was ☐☐ associated ☐☐ with ☐☐ high ☐☐ human ☐☐ densities, and a large ☐☐ of ☐☐ Fraser ☐☐ River ☐☐ basin. ☐☐ Population ☐☐ growth, ☐☐ associated ☐☐ with ☐☐ urbanization, ☐☐ was Fraser ☐☐ and 25% of ☐☐ in ☐☐ municipalities ☐☐ upstream ☐☐ of ☐☐ Hope, ☐☐ British ☐☐ Columbia ☐☐ years. ☐☐ ☐☐ Urbanization ☐☐ caused ☐☐ alterations ☐☐ to ☐☐ salmon ☐☐ habitat ☐☐ surfaces ☐☐ including ☐☐ roads, ☐☐ changes ☐☐ in ☐☐ hydrology, ☐☐ stream ☐☐ crossings ☐☐ and ☐☐ channelization ☐☐ ☐☐

Forestry ☐☐

While ☐☐ forest ☐☐ harvest ☐☐ has ☐☐ decreased ☐☐ significantly ☐☐ in ☐☐ recent ☐☐ decades, ☐☐ the stream ☐☐ crossing ☐☐ per kilometer ☐☐ in ☐☐ salmon ☐☐ areas ☐☐ and ☐☐ migration ☐☐ corridors ☐☐ (MOE ☐☐ 2008). ☐☐ ☐☐ Road ☐☐ crossings ☐☐ often ☐☐ serve ☐☐ as ☐☐ barriers ☐☐ to ☐☐ fish ☐☐ (MOE ☐☐ 1998), ☐☐ an ☐☐ integral ☐☐ aspect ☐☐ of ☐☐ the ☐☐ life ☐☐ history ☐☐ of ☐☐ anadromous ☐☐ salmon. Further, ☐☐ up ☐☐ to ☐☐ 90% ☐☐ of ☐☐ watershed area was in ☐☐ disturbed ☐☐ by ☐☐ Mountain ☐☐ Pine ☐☐ infestation, ☐☐ potentially ☐☐ increasing ☐☐ fire ☐☐ risk ☐☐ and ☐☐ sedimentation ☐☐ as ☐☐ well ☐☐ hydrology ☐☐ (Nelitz ☐☐ et ☐☐ al. ☐☐ 2011). ☐☐ ☐☐

Agriculture ☐☐

The ☐☐ land ☐☐ area ☐☐ occupied ☐☐ by ☐☐ agriculture ☐☐ has not increased ☐☐ in ☐☐ Agriculture past decades can ☐☐ cause ☐☐ physical ☐☐ alteration ☐☐ to ☐☐ streams, ☐☐ riparian ☐☐ zones, ☐☐ and ☐☐ floodplains. Sedimentation ☐☐ and ☐☐ destabilize ☐☐ stream ☐☐ banks ☐☐ causing ☐☐ widening ☐☐ of ☐☐ stream channels, ☐☐ vegetation ☐☐ which ☐☐ can ☐☐ increase ☐☐ stream ☐☐ temperatures, subsequently ☐☐ increasing ☐☐ runoff; ☐☐ deplete ☐☐ groundwater ☐☐ sources ☐☐ important ☐☐ to ☐☐ maintenance ☐☐ of ☐☐ stream temperature ☐☐ regimes; ☐☐ increase ☐☐ biochemical ☐☐ oxygen ☐☐ demand; ☐☐ introduce ☐☐ pathogens; ☐☐ increase ☐☐ sedimentation, ☐☐ nutrients ☐☐ and ☐☐ contaminants through ☐☐ application, ☐☐ fertilizers, ☐☐ and ☐☐ pesticides. ☐☐

Predation ☐☐

Predation ☐☐ of ☐☐ sockeye ☐☐ salmon ☐☐ occurs ☐☐ in ☐☐ both ☐☐ freshwater ☐☐ and ☐☐ marine ☐☐ environments. Christensen ☐☐ and ☐☐ Trites ☐☐ (2011) ☐☐ reviewed ☐☐ available ☐☐ literature ☐☐ on ☐☐ predation by largemouth ☐☐ bass ☐☐ as well ☐☐ as ☐☐ introduced ☐☐ species ☐☐ in ☐☐ the ☐☐ waterways. Known ☐☐ to ☐☐ feed ☐☐ on ☐☐ salmon ☐☐ species, ☐☐ but ☐☐ little ☐☐ data ☐☐ exists ☐☐ regarding predation (Christensen ☐☐ and ☐☐ Trites ☐☐ 2011). ☐☐ ☐☐ Hatchery ☐☐ and ☐☐ wild ☐☐ salmon ☐☐ both ☐☐ prey ☐☐ upon ☐☐ sockeye. Appendix ☐☐ 1, ☐☐ Kostow ☐☐ 2009, ☐☐ Tatara ☐☐ and ☐☐ Berejikian ☐☐ 2009, 2011), ☐☐ although ☐☐ impacts ☐☐ are ☐☐ not ☐☐ well ☐☐ documented ☐☐ in ☐☐ the ☐☐ Fraser ☐☐ River ☐☐ enhancement ☐☐ facilities ☐☐ in ☐☐ the ☐☐ Fraser ☐☐ River ☐☐ Basin ☐☐ are ☐☐ listed ☐☐ below ☐☐ to ☐☐ predation from ☐☐ hatchery ☐☐ fish, ☐☐ hatcheries ☐☐ are ☐☐ a ☐☐ source ☐☐ of ☐☐ potential ☐☐ predation. ☐☐ have ☐☐ additional ☐☐ negative ☐☐ ecological ☐☐ effects ☐☐ on ☐☐ wild ☐☐ salmon ☐☐ populations ☐☐ (Christensen ☐☐ et ☐☐ al. ☐☐ 2009). ☐☐

☐☐

Climate ☐☐ Change ☐☐

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In British Columbia, minimum temperatures have increased 0.17°C per decade and precipitation has increased by 22% per century (Hinch and Martins 2011). Climate change has already caused

earlier snowmelt in British Columbia rivers (Stewart et al. 2005), and water temperatures in the Fraser River have increased at a rate of 0.33°C per decade, increasing overall water temperature by about 2°C in the past 60 years (Chittendon et al. 2009). Lakes in the region are also warming, altering timing of spring ice break-up and lake turnover (Schindler et al. 2005).

Temperature related factors have also received a great deal of attention with respect to a marked increase in mortality during river migration and on spawning grounds (Hinch and Martins 2011).

Eggs. Although sufficient data is lacking to thoroughly examine potential impacts of increased rainfall resulting from climate change, it is possible that increased rainfall is causing increased scour of redds, thereby decreasing overall egg survival (Hinch and Martins 2011).

Fry. Temperature increases may be facilitating increased predation on lake-rearing sockeye fry (Hinch and Martins 2011).

Adult migrants. Warmer river temperatures appear to decrease survival of adult migrants, particularly in early-run stocks, likely from a combination of exposure to temperatures above the 18 °C thermal tolerance, increased energy required for migration at higher flows, and combined higher metabolism in elevated temperatures (Eliason et al. 2011, Hinch and Martins 2011). Pathogens including *Parvicapsula minibicornis* also develop more quickly in warmer temperatures (Cooke et al. 2004, Crossin et al. 2009), increasing physiological stress and decreasing swimming performance of adult migrants (Bradford et al. 2010, Wagner et al. 2005). Earlier migration timing, likely related to elevated temperatures, has coincided with en route and pre-spawning mortality exceeding 90% in some years, impacting larger stocks and pushing already threatened stocks such as Cultus Lake to near extinction (Cooke et al. 2004). These trends are expected to increase as climate change progresses (Hague et al. 2011, Rand et al. 2006).

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Marine □ environment □ the □ Fraser □ River

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Contaminants □

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The □ Strait □ of □ Georgia □ is □ bordered □ by □ British □ Columbia's □ main □ port □ Vancouver □ and □ Victoria. □ About □ 800,000 □ people □ live □ in □ the □ area □ (MCE □ 2006). □ Household □ generate □ about □ 100 □ kg □ of □ waste □ each □ year □ (MCE □ 2006). □ Despite □ vast □ populations □ in □ the □ area □ (Johannes □ et □ al. □ 2011), □ contaminants □ in □ the □ Strait □ of □ Georgia □ show □ a □ general □ improvement □ management □ practices □ including □ recycling □ programs □ and □ secondary □ or □ tertiary □ treatment □ have □ improved □ in □ the □ last □ 10 □ years □ (Johannes □ et □ al. □ 2011). □ In □ the □ 1990s □ polychlorinated □ biphenyls □ (PCBs), □ mercury, □ dioxins □ and □ furans □ were □ documented □ at □ much □ higher □ concentrations □ in □ waters, □ sediment, □ and □ other □ biota □ in □ the □ Strait □ of □ Georgia □ (Johannes □ et □ al. □ 2011). □ Pulp □ and □ paper □ shores □ of □ the □ Strait □ were □ a □ major □ contributor □ of □ contaminants □ at □ that □ time □ (Johannes □ et □ al. □ 2011). □ In □ recent □ decades, □ polybrominated □ diphenyl □ ether □ products □ and □ pharmaceuticals □ have □ increased □ in □ the □ Strait □ of □ Georgia □ (Johannes □ et □ al. □ 2011).

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Land/Marine □ Waters □ Use

□

Shipping □ and □ marine □ vessels □ transport □ most □ goods □ and □ services □ across □ be □ a □ source □ of □ noise, □ contaminants, □ ~~and~~ ~~habitat~~ ~~spills~~, □ ~~and~~ ~~introductions~~ □ through □ ballast □ water □ exchange, □ though □ Johannes □ et □ al. □ (2011) □ conclude □ traffic □ has □ only □ limited □ direct □ interaction □ with □ sockeye □ habitat. □ □ □ main □ navigation □ channel □ at □ the □ ~~mouth~~ ~~of~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~three~~ ~~feet~~ ~~deep~~ □ over □ the □ years, □ though □ dredging □ activities □ are □ limited □ to □ periods □ when □ sockeye □ estuary □ (FREMP □ 2006). □ □ □ Dikes □ are □ extensive □ throughout □ the □ low □ causing □ an □ estimated □ 40% □ ~~in~~ ~~habitat~~ ~~loss~~ ~~area~~ □ (□). □ □ □ 2004 □ their □ construction □ has □ slowed □ in □ recent □ decades □ and □ some □ have □ been □ habitat □ (Johannes □ et □ al. □ 2011).

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Predation □

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Significant □ marine □ predators □ of □ Fraser □ River □ sockeye □ ~~may~~ ~~be~~ ~~salmon~~ □ ~~may~~ □ in □ (*Squalus* □ *acanthias* □ salmon □ ~~sharks~~ □ *dipraxis* □ and □ dagger ~~fish~~ ~~sharks~~ □ (*□* *nikparini*; Christensen □ and □ Trites □ 2011) □ ~~seals~~ ~~and~~ ~~vitulids~~ ~~and~~ ~~Steller~~ □ sea □ ~~lion~~ ~~fish~~ ~~and~~ ~~also~~ □ common □ predators □ ~~and~~ ~~have~~ ~~increased~~ □ since □ their □ protection □ in □ 1970 □ under □ the □ Fisheries □ Act □ (Forrest □ et □ Trites □ 2011). □ □ White □ ~~Pacific~~ ~~herring~~ □ (*□* *macrocephalus*) □ are □ unlikely □ to □ prey □ upon □ sockeye □ ~~and~~ ~~salmon~~ □ ~~likely~~ □ competitor □ for □ food □ in □ the □ Strait □ of □ Georgia □ and □ have □ been □ in □ decades □ (Christensen □ and □ Trites □ 2011).

□

Many □ ~~may~~ ~~be~~ □ introduced □ species □ in □ the □ Strait □ of □ Georgia □ also □ prey □ with □ Fraser □ ~~river~~ □ salmon. □ □ The □ Strait □ hosts □ an □ estimated □ 117 □ more □ than □ twice □ the □ number □ found □ throughout □ the □ remainder □ of □ result □ of □ human □ population □ growth, □ aquaculture, □ and □ shipping □ activities □ (2011). □ ~~While~~ ~~available~~ □ data □ is □ inconclusive, □ the □ recently □ documented □ Hu □ (*Dosidicus* □ *gigas*) □ ~~grove~~ □ 2005 □ may □ prove □ to □ be □ significant □ predators □ of □ (Christensen □ and □ Trites □ 2011).

□

Christensen □ and □ Trites □ (2011) □ indicate □ ~~that~~ ~~exists~~ ~~sufficient~~ ~~to~~ ~~adequately~~ □ identify □ key □ predators □ of □ sockeye □ salmon □ and □ their □ overall □ impact, □ as □ well □ as □ critical □ cumulative □ impact □ of □ predation □ overall □ on □ sockeye □ in □ both □ freshwater □ environments □

□

Climate □ Change

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Major □ cycles □ associated □ with □ climate □ and □ sea □ surface □ temperature □ in □ the □ Ocean, □ the □ ~~El~~ ~~South~~ ~~Oscillation~~ □ (ENSO) □ and □ the □ Pacific □ Decadal □ Cycle □ have □ exhibited □ pattern □ changes □ in □ recent □ decades □ Mantua □ et □ al. □ 1997 □ Marine □ habitat □ for □ Fraser □ River □ sockeye □ salmon, □ the □ Strait □ of □ Georgia □

a a a g a Chittenden et al. (2009) pH and salinity have decreased in the (1990-2007) Pacific period from 1980's to the present experienced warmer conditions than those during the previous 1940 (Figure 3, Johannes et al. 2011). Sea surface temperature 1.5 °C in the past (Chittenden et al. 2009) temperatures are coincident with blooms of the *Heterosigma* and *Halosira* blooms can cause salmon mortality through diminished respiratory function and ability to uptake al. 2010)

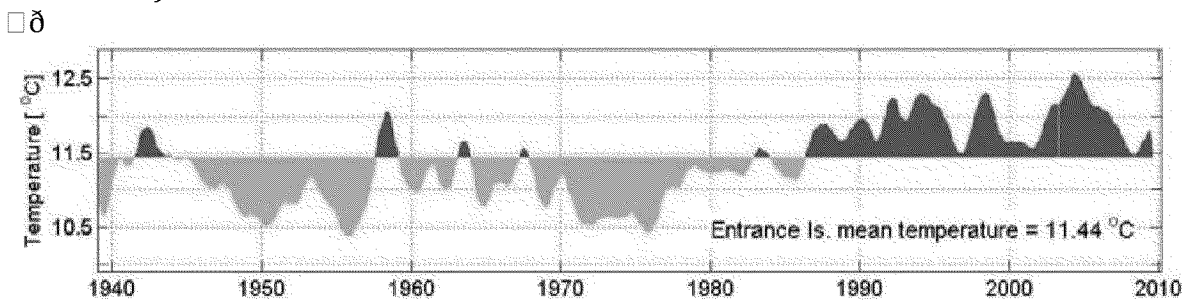


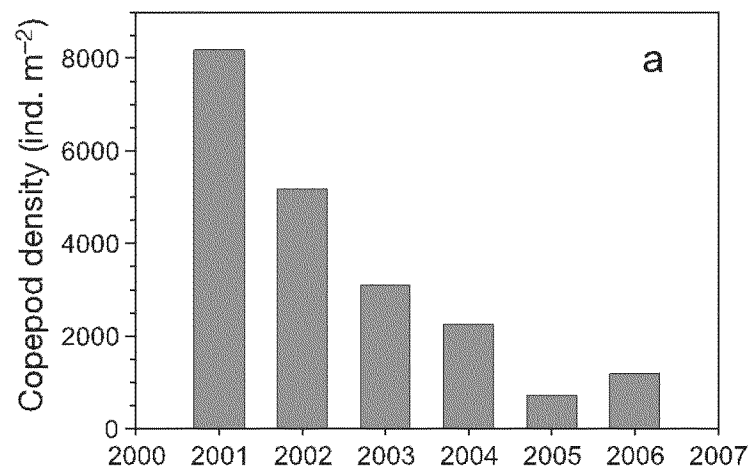
Figure 3. Time series of monthly temperature anomalies from the long mean from 1936 to Entrance Island, central Strait of Georgia, BC (From 2010)

Temperature changes may also be causing a decline in zooplankton, for rearing sock salmon (Figure 4, Johannes et al. 2011). Decline taxa coincide with increases of other species which sockeye may food quality is considerably lower with *Halosira* (Edwards et al. 2009) (Edwards et al. 2011) conclude that warming temperatures coincide with declining availability and quality, may limit sockeye growth decrease condition

that warming temperatures coincide with declining availability and quality, may limit sockeye growth decrease condition

that warming temperatures coincide with declining availability and quality, may limit sockeye growth decrease condition

Figure 4. Declining zooplankton (*Neoclanus* sp.) abundance in Strait of Georgia From John MacDonald 2009



Fisheries Management

Fraser River Management

Management of Fraser River sockeye and other salmon falls under Due to the international range of sockeye in the fishery is subject

international Pacific Salmon Treaty between the U.S. and Canada and six agencies (English et al. 2011).

Canada's main legal tool for sockeye salmon habitat conservation is place since 1976. The Wildlife Act allowed to protect physical habitat stages of sockeye, including their food sources and the quality of live (Johannes et al. 2011). The A "net gain" in overall acreage through regulation of development, restoration of lost or damaged habitat 'enhancement' in the form of hatcheries and spawning channels. and compensation projects have been (Wilfontine 2003) however hatcheries have unintended, negative ecological impacts on sockeye salmon (see 2009).

Escapement targets, set annually under the Pacific Salmon Treaty by are complicated by the cyclic nature of many Fraser River stocks variability in returns (English et al. 2011). Further, measurement complicated by en route loss of sockeye (Figure 5). Escapement the Early Stuart sockeye from 2005 targets were met, English et al (2011) conclude that overharvest likely occurred in Early Stuart sockeye and for Early Summer sockeye (Figure 6).

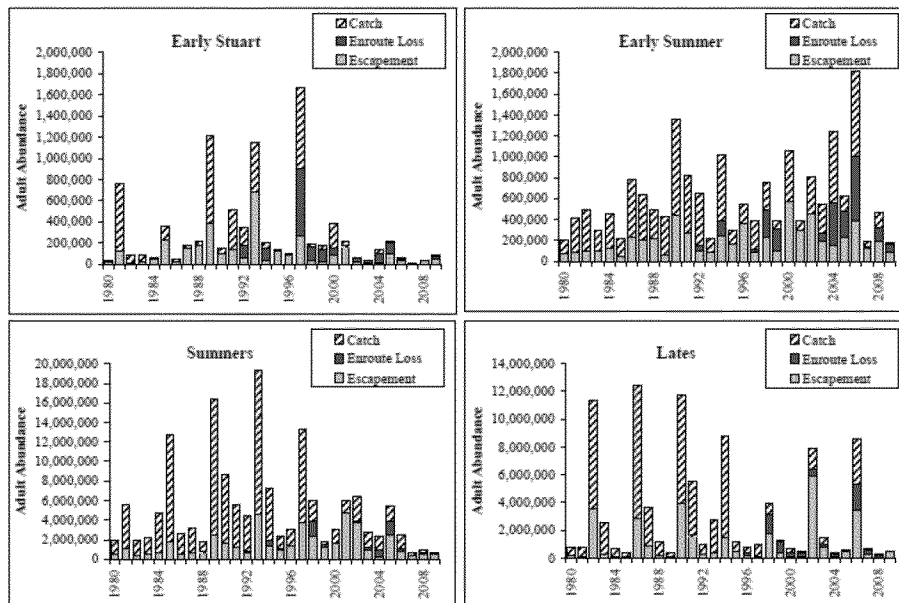


Figure 5. Estimates of total catch and escapement for sockeye salmon from group. Enroute losses were not estimated prior to 1992. From English et al

Bristol Bay Management

English et al. (2011) reviewed differences in management structure and the Fraser River and following conclusions. While the Fraser River to a complex, international management structure, management of Bristol

entirely within the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and of Biologists. The structure of Bristol Bay management allows for change regulations on a daily basis during the fishing season, while management require a much lengthier process for Fraser River sockeye. Mix also rely on minor in Bristol Bay due to the terminal nature of districts for nine stocks, compared to the larger groups which consist of more than 25 stocks. Gear types are limited in River. Further, due to relatively high escapement and low human Bay region, recreational and subsistence fisheries in Bristol Bay amount total harvest, while First Nations and recreational allocation in the densely populated Fraser River. Bristol Bay's sockeye runs are with a typical season lasting six weeks compared to more than River. Overall, Bristol Bay benefits portfolio of many stocks and history types exploiting multiple large, productive rivers, resulting in fisheries closures (Schindler et al. 2010). In contrast, Fraser River limited or closed in the last six to 20 years.

Wide fluctuations in sockeye returns to the Fraser River (Figure 1) adjust goals every year, resulting in overharvest and some stocks. variability in returns allows Bristol Bay management to go based on maximum sustained yield principles. Finally, escapement estimates in significantly more accurate than those in the Fraser River owing to counts and sonar upstream of each shelf the Bristol Bay vs. essential one hydroacoustic site in the Fraser River) and the fact that to the very high en route mortality, to which some (up to 50% subject to between spawning grounds).

Influences on Bristol Bay and Fraser River sockeye

Due to their economic importance and historically high returns, Bristol River sockeye salmon have been compared in recent months. In Bristol Bay, the Fraser River is as an example of mining and (Joling 2011). However, watershed area of the Fraser Basin more Bristol Bay Fraser River sockeye abundance pales in comparison (Figure 1) though the Kvichak River listing as a stock of concern (Morstad 2008). sockeye are not currently experiencing the types of declines exhibited. Possible reasons for these differences abound, and a few are discussed

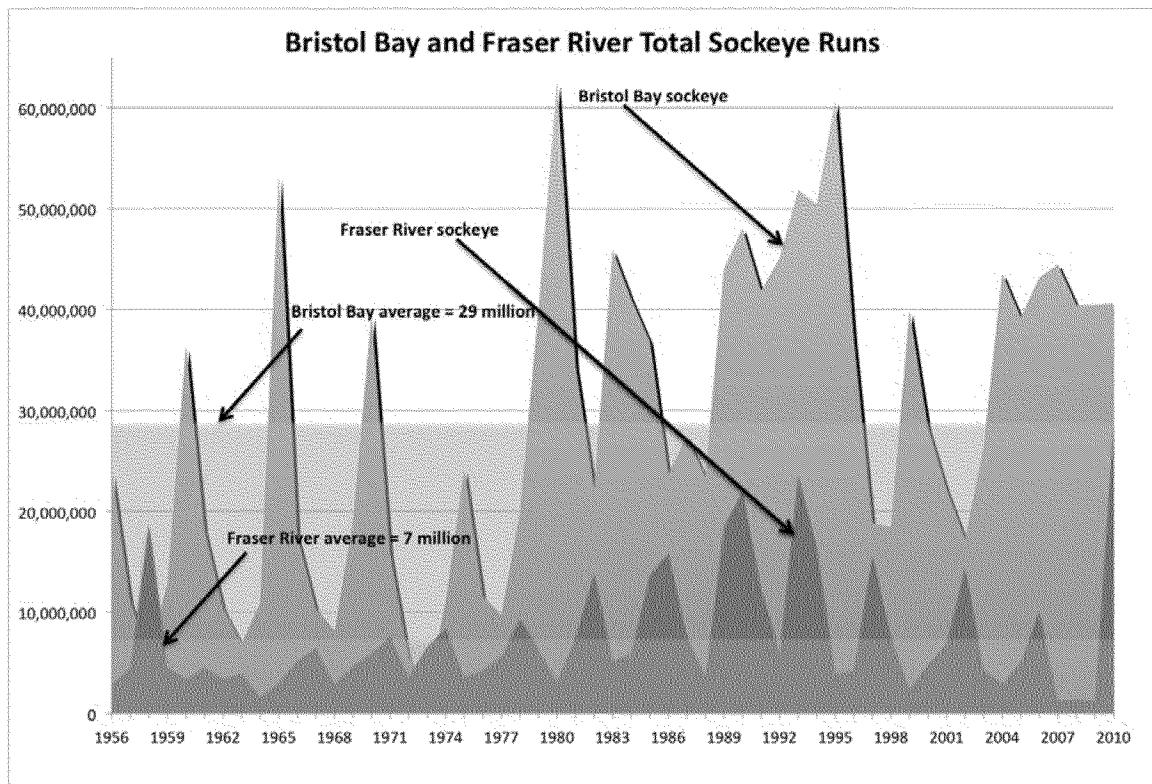


Figure 6. Bristol Bay (blue) and Fraser River (red) total runs (catch + escapement) from 1956 to 2010. Averages for each river are indicated by shaded lines. Data from PSC and FLBS.

Habitat

Bristol Bay encompasses nine major watersheds with a drainage area of 238,100 km² (FLBS 2011), while the Fraser River watershed drains 238,100 km² (Price et al. 2011). Further, the two basins are subject to opposite trends. Bristol Bay is experiencing productivity, while the Fraser River and other U.S. rivers experience lower productivity (Mantua et al. 1997, and Hare et al. 2002). The Bristol Bay basin was recently ranked as containing complex habitat throughout the range of Pacific salmon, making it more impacts of climate change (Mantua and Francis 2004, FLBS 2011). watersheds supporting salmon, including the Fraser River (FLBS 2011).

Aquaculture

In addition to management practices (reviewed by English et al. 2011), note that major aquaculture activities in the Fraser River basin are those in Bristol Bay, where aquaculture is prohibited. About 70% of the migration route of Fraser River sockeye salmon (Price et al. 2011) research is controversial, farms have been associated with increased lice and disease (Price et al. 2011). Globally, marine sustainability is reduced in areas supporting aquaculture (Ford and My

potential impacts to Fraser River sockeye from aquaculture activities (www.cohencommission.com).
Further, in response to population declines of Fraser River sockeye, government operates nearly 30 hatcheries in the basin (MacDonald et al. 1). Unintended effects of hatcheries include increased occurrence of (2007), direct predation of wild fish by hatchery fish (Naman and competition for food resources (Dittman et al. 2011 in press) and environment (Tatara et al. 2008), in estuaries (Daly-Ruggie et al. 2011), al. 2011). The end result of competition is decreased productivity (2009). Bristol Bay does not support any salmon hatcheries, and prohibited in the Bay and throughout the State of Alaska.

Human Development

More than two-thirds of British Columbians live in the Fraser River overall population of 2.73 million. Residents in 2006 of human activity including urbanization, forestry, mining, agriculture, and construction of non native species, and other factors are widely considered to be a declines of salmon worldwide (Nelissen et al. 1992, 2006). Bristol Bay currently supports only about seventeen thousand community population of less than 5000. At present, the region does not support major human activity. In contrast to the water quality problems in above, available data for waters in British Columbia indicate that well conditions with low concentrations of dissolved materials and other

Cumulative Impacts

The analysis conducted for the Cohen Commission is limited to the Fraser River sockeye within the past twenty years, during which declines noticeable and commercially problematic (Pacific Salmon Commission data) of the reports released to date conclude existing baseline and other insufficient to thoroughly examine the factors in question (Cooke et al. and Trites 2011, Hinch and Martin 2011, and others). The individual potential factors in declines, failing to consider the synergistic factors combined. Christensen and Trites (2011) conclude after the of sockeye salmon cumulative threats are far more difficult to evaluate factor. In the case of Fraser River sockeye, temperature stress from more intense competition due to increased escapement with resulting loss running the gauntlet through predators whose alternative prey may all have had cumulative effects. Assessing the cumulative effects stresses will require integrated evaluation. Pateman et al. (2011) indicate "should not necessarily expect to find a single dominant cause of sockeye." Officially (in press), in a paper on Fraser sockeye response to climate change, indicates that the cumulative impacts of climate change

will be much greater than the impacts on individual stages. He concludes that the impacts will also carry forward through the potentially ongoing decline to a downward trend in productive capacity. Predicting a future for Fraser River sockeye salmon, a major salmon river south of the coast where long-term declines from 40% of their former range (NRC 1996).

Conclusions

Fraser River sockeye salmon populations are suffering from a myriad of factors associated with urban and industrial development, leading to dramatic declines in productivity, multiple fisheries closures, and international population listings. In freshwater, contamination from mining, wood product and other wastewater treatment plants, landfills, and salmon enhancement facilities (and spawning channels) has a high level of contamination in 5000 sites, causing problems with pH, TSS, turbidity, nutrients, metals, phenols, personal care products, and pharmaceuticals. Introduced predators such as yellow perch and snappers, as well as hatchery fish may also be impacting Fraser River sockeye salmon. Finally, increased river temperatures resulting from climate change are causing higher mortality of sockeye en route to spawning grounds, likely due to physiological stress at high temperatures, decreased swimming efficiency, and faster development of pathogens.

In the marine environment, industrialization and urban growth has increased the Strait of Georgia by polybrominated diphenylethers, personal care products, pharmaceuticals, dredging and diking has reduced marine and estuarine productivity. Increased ship traffic is associated with accidental spills, noise, and impacts on native species. Warmer marine temperatures resulting from climate change, along with more frequent harmful algal blooms, resulting in lower oxygen levels in the environment, as well as decreased zooplankton levels which are an important salmon food source.

Current efforts to understand Fraser River sockeye potential causes, failing to consider the synergistic effects of combined stressors such as contaminants, introduced predators, climate change, and others. Further, current data rely upon inadequate historical datasets, to satisfactorily define baseline conditions.

Given their distinct physical and biological nature, as well as the rapid rates of urbanization and industrialization in the Fraser River basin relative to other basins, recent comparisons between the two watersheds are suspect. However, comparing sockeye salmon populations alone, the Bristol Bay sockeye salmon system produces more fish than the Fraser River by four times in less than half its size. The comparison between the two systems may be the inability of human development to sustain salmon.

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Appendix 1 Salmon enhancement facilities in the Fraser River Basin. N/A = not available

Area of Interest/Facility Name	Facility Type	Species Targeted	Organization
Cultus Lake			
Chilliwack River Hatchery	Hatchery	Chinook, Coho, Chum, and Steelhead	DFO Operations
Fraser Valley Trout Hatchery	Hatchery	Native and Domestic Rainbow Trout, Anadromous and Coastal Cutthroat Trout, and Steelhead Trout	Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC
Centre Creek Streamkeeper Program	Hatchery	N/A	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Harrison River			
Chehalis River Hatchery	Hatchery	Coho, Chinook, Chum, Steelhead and Cutthroat Trout	DFO Operations
Weaver Creek Spawning Channel	Spawning Channel	Sockeye, Chum, Pink	DFO Operations
Fee Creek Spawning and Rearing Channel	Hatchery	Coho	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Lower Fraser River			
Inch Creek Hatchery	Hatchery	Coho, Chinook, Chum, and Steelhead Trout	DFO Operations
Bell-Irving Kanaka Creek Hatchery	Hatchery	Chum, Coho, Pink, Steelhead, and Cutthroat Trout	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Beecher Creek Streamkeepers	Hatchery	Coho, Cutthroat, and Rainbow Trout	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Al Grist Memorial Hatchery	Hatchery	Coho, Chinook, and Pink	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Chilliwack River Action Committee (Trap Site)	Hatchery	Steelhead Trout, Coho, Chinook, Chum, and Pink	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Stave Valley Salmonid Enhancement Society	Hatchery	Coho and Chum	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Nicomen Slough Spawning Channel	Hatchery	Coho and Chum	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Musqueam Creek Project	Hatchery	Coho, Chum, and Cutthroat Trout	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Steveston High School Hatchery (on-site)	Hatchery	Coho and Chinook	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Cougar Creek Salmonid Enhancement Group	Hatchery	Coho	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Hoy Creek Hatchery	Hatchery	Coho	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
River Springs Salmon Enhancement and Stream keepers	Hatchery	Coho, Chum, and Chinook	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)

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Area of Interest/Facility Name	Facility Type	Species Targeted	Organization
Lower Thompson River			
Spius Creek Hatchery	Hatchery	Chinook, Coho, and Steelhead Trout	DFO Operations Community Development Program
Loon Creek Hatchery	Hatchery	Rainbow Trout and Kokanee	Hatcheries Community Development Program
Deadman River Hatchery	Hatchery	Chinook and Coho	Hatcheries
Nechako River			
Nadina River Spawning Channel	Spawning Channel	Sockeye	DFO Operations
Spruce City Wildlife Fish Hatchery	Hatchery	Chinook	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
North Thompson River			
Clearwater Trout Hatchery	Hatchery	Rainbow Trout and Kokanee Salmon	Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC Community Development Program
Dunn Lake Hatchery	Hatchery	Coho and Chinook	Hatcheries
Pitt River			
Upper Pitt River Hatchery	Hatchery	Chinook and Sockeye	DFO Operations
ALLCO Hatchery	Hatchery	Coho, Steelhead, Cutthroat, Pink, and Chinook	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Hyde Creek Hatchery	Hatchery	Coho and Chum	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Quesnel River			
Horsefly Spawning Channel	Spawning Channel	Sockeye	DFO Operations
Seton-Portage			
Gates Creek Spawning Channel	Spawning Channel	Pink	DFO Operations
Seton Creek Spawning Channels	Spawning Channel	Pink	DFO Operations
South Thompson River			
Shuswap River Hatchery	Hatchery	Chinook	DFO Operations
Kingfisher Community Hatchery	Hatchery	Coho, Spring, Sockeye, and Kokanee	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Adams River	Fishway	Sockeye	DFO Operations

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Area of Interest/Facility Name	Facility Type	Species Targeted	Organization
Upper Fraser River			
Penny Hatchery	Hatchery	Chinook	Community Development Program Hatcheries
Anderson Lake Fish Hatchery	Hatchery	Sockeye and Kokanee	Public Involvement Programs (Volunteer)
Hells Gate Fishways	Fishway	Sockeye, Coho, Pink, Chinook, Steelhead Trout	DFO Operations

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